

HOBBS AND THE ABSOLUTE STATE
345

" Every man called* that which pleaseth and is
delightful to
himself good and that evil which displeaseth
him. Nor is
there any such thing as absolute goodness,
considered without
relation; for even the goodness which we
apprehend in
God Almighty is his goodness to us/* Most
things, he admits,
are a mixture of good and evil." When the greater
part is good,
the whole is called good, and when the evil
overweighteth,
the whole is called evil/' This crude
utilitarianism is vital to
the larger purpose of discovering the basis for
laws and insti-
tutions. God exists, but we can have no
conception of the
Deity. Since everything is produced by
something which
went before, we go back and b\$.ck "till we
come to the
eternal, that is to say the first power of all
powers and first
'cause of all causes ; and this it is which all men
conceive by
the name of God, implying eternity,
incomprehensibility and
omnipotence. And thus all that will consider
may know that
God is, though not what he is. Even a man
that is botn
blind, though it be not possible for him to have
any imagina-
tion what kiod of thing fire is, yet he cannot
but know that
somewhat there is that men call fire, because it
warmeth him."

All attributes ascribed to the Deity are merely
expressions of
our incapacity or our reverence. For instance
when we say
that he is a spirit, we merely desire to abstract
from him all
corporeal grossness. Hobbes's God is a
purely intellectual
conception, indispensable to the understanding of
the universe
but playing no part icx the supreme problem of
creating and
maintaining community life. Bacon compared
certain philo-
sophers to the stars, which give little light
because they are
so high. That is exactly how Hobbes thought of
God.

The second part, *De Corpore Politito*, opens with
a depressing

picture of primitive conditions. " Every man by
 nature hath
 right to all things, that is to.do whatsoever he
 listeth to whom
 he listeth, to possess, use, and enjby all things
 he will and can.
Natura dedit omnia omnibus!" But this is nothing
 but a state of
 war, for even the weaker in strength or wit can
 kill his fellow.
 Since every individual instinctively seeks his
 own safety,
 reason, which is no' less an ingredient of man
 than passion,
 points the way out. The first step is for
 everyone to divest
 himself of his natural right to all things. The
 second is to
 transfer his right by covenant. The third is to
 secure general
 consent to a similar surrender, since the mutual
 aid of two or
 three is of little avail. The fourth is the erection
 of some
 common or sovereign power for their common
 peace, defence,